



For Immediate Release

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Thursday, July 13, 2006

***ENZI APPLAUDS SENATE APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES,
ENCOURAGES SWIFT ACTION ON PERKINS CAREER AND
TECHNICAL TRAINING EDUCATION ACT***

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today applauded the Senate for appointing conferees to finalize the "Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act," S.250, a bill he said will "help close the gap that threatens America's long-term competitiveness," by addressing the needs of the nation's changing workforce.

"Reauthorizing the Perkins Act will help strengthen our workforce and enable America to compete and succeed in the global economy," Enzi said. "This legislation will require state agencies to work together on identifying the needs of the workforce and in designing job and skills training programs to match those needs."

"The education and training programs provided by the Perkins Act are too important to students, workers, businesses, local communities and our nation's economy to delay," Enzi said. "I urge the Conference Committee to act quickly and send this vital reauthorization back to the Senate and House for final passage, so that the President can sign the bill into law."

Some estimates suggest that 60 percent of the jobs created in the next decade will require skills that only 20 percent of workers today possess, and that 80 percent of jobs will require education or training beyond high school. The Perkins Act, S. 250, is a critical piece of a comprehensive effort, which includes the Workforce Investment Act, the Higher Education Amendments Act, and Youthbuild, to train American workers to fill the good jobs being created.

S. 250 will improve programs authorized under the Perkins Act by requiring:

- **A More Effective Accountability System** - that aligns accountability requirements with other federal education and training programs;
- **Stronger Links to Businesses** - that build stronger partnerships between high schools, colleges, and businesses, so they can better meet the needs of the workforce, including small businesses;
- **Better Links from High School to College** - that require states to outline a logical sequence of courses, including high school and college courses, that will lead to an industry recognized credential, certificate, or postsecondary degree;
- **Stronger Academic Focus** - that promotes an enhanced emphasis on academic instruction for federally supported career and technical education programs consistent with other federal education programs such as “No Child Left Behind.”

Senators appointed as Conferees include: Chairman Enzi; Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH); Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN); Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH); Senator Richard Burr (R-NC); Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA); Senator John Ensign (R-NV); Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT); Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS); Ranking Member Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA); Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT); Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA); Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD); Senator Patty Murray (D-WA); Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY).

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